

Mr Stephen Otter
Chief Constable
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3 March 2008

Dear Councillor

As I enter my second year as Chief Constable, I thought you might find it helpful for me to present the progress we have made in improving the policing service across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly over the past 12 months. I would also like to take this opportunity to set out our plans for next year.

At the heart of my aspirations for the force is our commitment to provide our public the best possible policing service. This past year has seen us improve the way we engage with local people to tackle the things that make them feel unsafe. Neighbourhood policing has been revitalised across the force with teams of officers working closely with council staff and local people to make a real difference. We have also made our policing more visible and accessible to people which has resulted in rising public satisfaction and confidence levels.

Perhaps not so visible to the public is the work we have done with our partners which has resulted in crime going down and detections going up over the last year. Effectively we are catching a higher proportion of criminals and our streets are safer than they were. I hope that the attached three graphs help you see the progress we have made in a year.


For these improvements to continue we need to get more of our officers out on to the beat to visibly deal with those crimes that local people say are priorities; crimes like anti-social behaviour and criminal damage. People tell us clearly and often that this is what they want, as do my front line officers. We have therefore worked closely with the Police Authority to create a vision for the force which puts 200 more officers out onto the beat and keeps them out for more of the time by reducing unnecessary bureaucracy. Much of this will be funded by savings made by changing the way we run our back office functions, but it also needs an injection of new funding which is what part of the increase in precept will pay for.

To put the extra 200 officers back to the front line, we need a budget increase of 4.39% for next year and 3.5% in subsequent years. However, because of gearing, this means that the increase in the police element of the council tax is 7.94% next year and 4.94% in subsequent years. This sounds a lot in percentage terms, but in cash terms amounts to an increase of around £10 a year or 20 pence a week for a band D household. A service standstill budget with a 5% council tax increase would have cost 13 pence a week for band D. The extra 7 pence is to fund the movement of the 200 officers to the front line. Even with this increase, our new council tax is the lowest of all the forces in the region and well below the national average.

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I hope that you find this information useful and I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all of us in the force, to thank you for the support you give to our officers in your area.

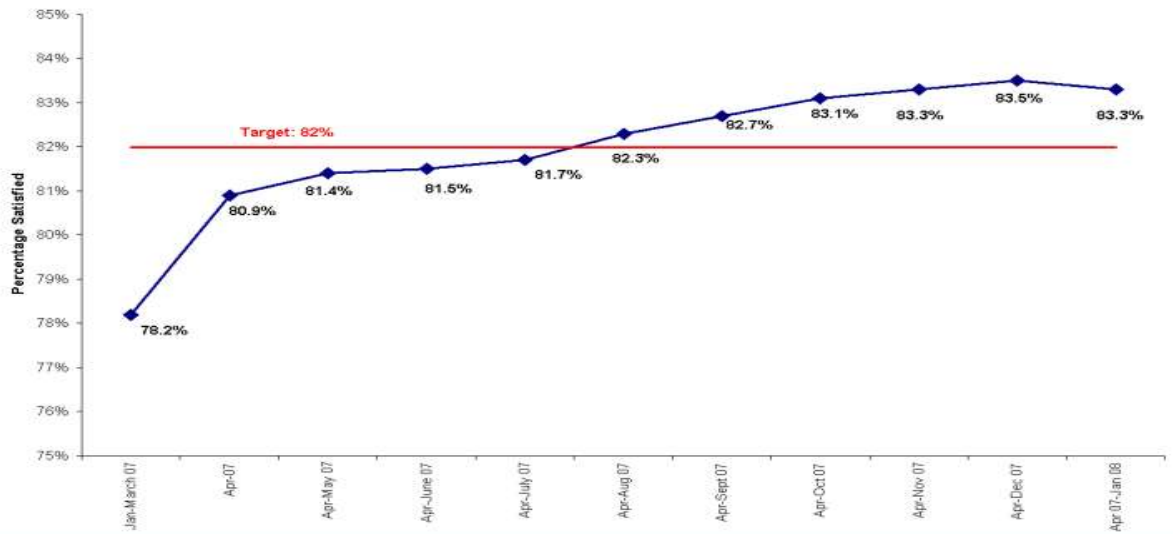
Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Otter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'S'.

Stephen Otter
Chief Constable

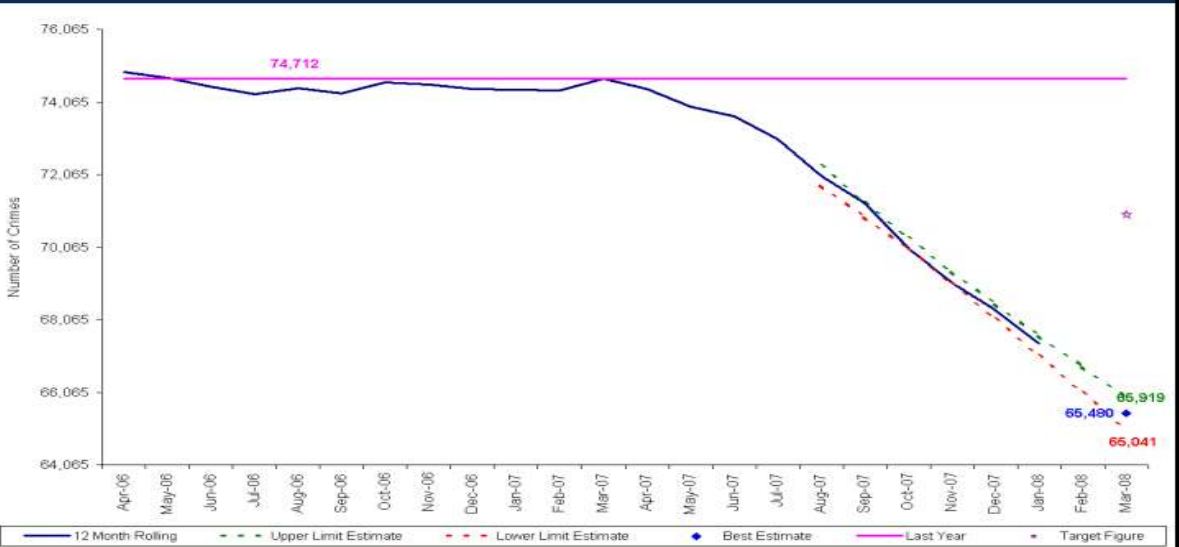
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Overall User Satisfaction



Building safer communities together

BCS Crime Reduction



Sanction Detection Rate



Building safer communities together